

To the members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning AB 2555 without my signature.

This bill would significantly increase civil penalties for gender-based wage discrimination and is similar to legislation I have vetoed in each of the past two years. As I have noted before, the historical trend of women earning less than men for doing the same work must be stopped. Unfortunately, the provisions of this measure will not help achieve this goal.

Both state and federal law already provide criminal and civil penalties for an employer that pays discriminatory wage rates to employees on account of gender. In fact, penalties and available civil remedies under California law were increased significantly in 2003. Since then, there have been only 15 gender-based wage discrimination complaints filed with the Labor Commissioner. This suggests that increased civil penalties are not the best way to ensure wage equity. In fact, the provisions of this bill will do little more than increase frivolous litigation, a result that benefits no employer or worker, regardless of gender.

For these reasons, I am returning this bill without my signature.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger